

Editorial: Leisure Education – the past, the present, and the future

Leisure Education is an umbrella term used to denote approaches that employ leisure activities intended to holistically develop an individual, especially in the sense of his or her ability to responsibly manage their leisure. In practice, these approaches may differ depending on the particular methods in use, but they may also vary regionally: thus, we can discuss various types of animation, informal education, and experiential and outdoor forms of education. From a research point of view, this topic falls under the categories of Leisure Science, Leisure and Recreation Studies, and Social Pedagogy. In Central Europe, it proceeds from the German tradition of Freizeit Pädagogik. Significant texts in the field of leisure education have thus far been presented by authors such as M. Smith, R. Stebbins, H. Opaschowski and M. Pollo.

There are also several scientific and professional associations in the world dedicated to addressing issues of Leisure Education. We can name, for example, Leisure Science Association (UK) which has provided a multi-disciplinary and global forum for anyone interested in the research and study of leisure education since 1975. It is the publisher of the international journal *Leisure Studies*. Another important association is The World Leisure Organization, which operates in consultative status with the United Nations. It was founded in 1952 as a world-wide, non-governmental association of persons and organizations dedicated to discovering and fostering conditions best permitting the experience of leisure-time as a force for human development and well-being. There are also several national leisure-based organizations, for example in the Czech Republic, two different organizations: The Association of Leisure Workers' Educators and also a division of the Czech Pedagogical Society are dedicated to questions of leisure education. These organizations in the Czech Republic have organised at least one annual scientific conference dedicated to leisure education for the past 15 years. Leisure Education continues to face challenges in gaining appreciation by the educational research community. The reason is that the primary focus of Czech pedagogical journals, conferences and various boards continues to be on school pedagogy, with little appreciation for questions of leisure education. Sometimes we are told that leisure education is not sufficiently important to warrant a separate scientific discipline. This volume aims to show that the opposite is true.

This special issue dedicated to Leisure Education is aimed at topics such as the transformation of animation approaches across Europe, open vs. guided forms of work with children and adults, hobbies as a form of leisure-time-competence development, experiential strategies within the framework of leisure education, multi-day events and socio-edutainment. The issue includes publications containing original research and profound insights into the topics addressed. Let us introduce each in a few words.

Martina Kočerová deals with post-adolescent society as a challenge for education. Her paper describes the *kidult* phenomenon that arose in the early 20th century in modern Western society. The unwillingness to adopt a social role corresponding with one's age is the main characteristic of this lifestyle, so it is necessary to take the path of an education which develops thinking and contemplation while encouraging critical judgement, consideration and classification. In this sense, it aims to promote critical and creative thinking, and reflexive practice, and not only in formal but especially in non-formal education.

Such a style of education is presented in the contribution by Helena Zbudilová. She captures the most important developmental moments of socio-cultural animation in Spain, from its beginnings to the present, with regard to its anchoring in the contemporary and social context. The text also focuses on the primary modalities of socio-cultural animation in Spain, the professionalization of animation and also includes a brief overview of socio-cultural animation in Latin America.

Another way to prepare young people in their free time for their full-fledged life in society is so-called socio-edutainment. Martina Blažková and Richard Macků show it in the example of children's summer camps. The aim of this paper is to highlight the educational potential of children's summer camps in the Czech Republic within the context of an empirical study examining the viewpoints of children who have participated in them as well as the view of their parents. Authors summarise the findings of the empirical survey and contrast them with the reality of real children's camps.

Vít Šťastný's contribution concerns Czech school play-centres, which are a traditional part of the education system providing afterschool care for primary school pupils. The study aims to analyse the availability (capacities, vacancies, enrolment rates of schoolchildren, etc.) of afterschool programs

offered by the Czech school play-centres overall and in socially excluded areas. Its findings suggest that the planning of school play-centres' capacity should be more effective.

The last item in this issue deals with an example of non-formal activities – geoscience education. Martina Pražáková and Lenka Pavlasová aim to review Czech domestic and international English written literature outputs on the topic of nonformal geoscience education. The study outlines two scientific approaches dealing with the theme – the first is represented by the specialists on leisure-based education, the second approach is formed by a community of subject-matter methodologists of different fields of study. The authors suggest that cooperation between them would make an important contribution to research on non-formal education.

Undoubtedly, leisure and non-formal education is the professional focus of many specialists in pedagogical science. The texts in this volume present a number of valuable research findings that reflect the reality of leisure education, which offers a key potential for the development of the children and youth's personalities and promotes their successful socialization. We believe that the current issue of the *Pedagogická Orientace* journal will offer its readers an interesting and inspirational view of the current topic of leisure education.

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